

Bush is right for the CIA

Now that President Ford has removed George Bush from consideration as a possible running-mate in 1976, there is no reason the senate should not confirm Mr. Bush as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

As a matter of fact, we did not think that Mr. Bush's possible candidacy, iffy at best, was itself much of a reason for not confirming him anyway.

True, Mr. Bush, now envoy to China, does have a partisan political background. He has been a Republican congressman from Texas and served as chairman of the Republican National Committee. And true also, the directorship of the CIA is a sensitive position.

Yet why, as some senators seemed to think, should having a political past or a political future be some kind of bar sinister to serving in it? If that's the lesson they've learned from Watergate, it is the wrong lesson.

Be it remembered that Richard Helms, who as CIA director permitted the agency to be abused by the Nixon White House, was not a politician. He was a career professional. And none

of his predecessors had any political pasts or futures, either. Yet it was under them that the agency perpetrated all those other abuses which congressional investigations have been revealing in their sordid detail.

As Mr. Bush put it during his testimony at hearings on his nomination, "Some of the difficulties the CIA has encountered might have been avoided if more political judgment had been brought to bear. I am not talking about narrow political partisanship. I am talking about the respect for the people and their sensitivities that most politicians understand."

The issue is the integrity of the man; and be it also noted that none of the senators who expressed opposition to Mr. Bush's nomination questioned his integrity. Indeed, his willingness to take on a job which may well lead to political nowhere is a demonstration of it. The CIA is now in a kind of limbo, with William E. Colby on his way out but still serving as director until his successor is confirmed. The Senate should promptly approve Mr. Bush when it reconvenes in January.